

Schoolyard Treefrog Monitoring Project

Get involved in herpetology! Help the U.S. Geological Survey scientists determine what species of treefrogs are found in schoolyard habitats in the Southeastern United States. Your class can participate by collecting data on treefrogs found in your community. A simple passive trapping system can be set up at your school that will attract a variety of treefrogs in a short time. With a little research in identifying treefrogs, your class can submit your findings to our database. We will publish monthly reports on frogs found at participating schools.

By visiting our website, you can compare the numbers and species of treefrogs you find with those found by other schools. Determine through research why some treefrogs are seen at your school while different species are observed at other schools. Design your own experiments while helping scientists at the Florida Caribbean Science Center study the “Big Picture” ... Amphibians and Reptiles and Their Environments!

Catching treefrogs is as simple as putting some PVC tubes upright in the ground. Treefrogs will begin using the tubes within a few days. The frogs can come and go freely. They are not trapped, but rather use the tubes as a protected, humid retreat during the day. At night, the treefrogs will leave the tubes to find food and, at the right time of year, to breed.



Left: Tubes in a schoolyard. Right: Removing a frog.

The tubes can be left without worry over the weekends and school vacations. To catch the most frogs, place the tubes near water, vegetation such as shrubs or tall grass, or a building with a light on at night.

To check for frogs, simply look into the tube to see if any are present. If so, you can easily remove the frog from the tube by pulling the tube out of the ground and gently shaking it while holding your hand over the opening at the top and a plastic sandwich bag over the opening at the bottom. The frog should fall into the plastic bag. Once in the bag, the treefrog can be observed and identified. When you are done, you should put the frog back into the tube from which it came.



Squirrel treefrog in a PVC tube.

Please remember the following guidelines when checking the tubes and handling treefrogs:

- Be gentle – treefrogs are small and have very sensitive skin!
- Always wash your hands before and after touching any frogs.
- Be sure there aren't any frogs in the hole in the ground before putting the tube back!
- Don't re-use the plastic bags you use for frogs for food!

The tubes should be checked once a week. After checking the tubes, you can enter the species and number of treefrogs



Green treefrog.

at our website (http://www.fcsc.usgs.gov/Education/Herpetology/Data_Submission/data_submission.html). Every month we will report your results on the website so you can see your monthly totals and compare them to those of other schools.

Alachua County is home to five species of treefrog you might find in your tubes: the Green Treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*), Pinewoods Treefrog (*H. femoralis*), Squirrel Treefrog (*H. squirella*), Barking Treefrog (*H. gratiosa*), and Gray Treefrog (*H. chrysoscelis*). To help you identify these species, we suggest the following websites and field guides:

- www.fcsc.usgs.gov/herps/Frogs_and_Toads/frogs_and_toads.html
- www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/frogs/default.htm
- Bartlett, R.D., and P.P. Bartlett, 1999. *A Field Guide to Florida Reptiles and Amphibians*. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company.
- Carmichael, P., and W. Williams, 1991. *Florida's Fabulous Reptiles and Amphibians*. Tampa, Florida: World Publications.
- Conant, R., and J.T. Collins, 1998. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America*, 3rd ed. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin. (This is the Peterson Field Guide.)

For more information, please contact:
Jennifer Staiger
U. S. Geological Survey
7920 NW 71st Street
Gainesville, FL 32653
jennifer_staiger@usgs.gov
(352) 378-8181